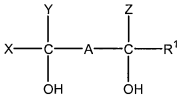
AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows.

In the Claims:

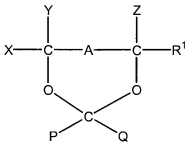
1. (currently amended) A process for the preparation of a polymerisable composition comprising a cross-linker and a polymerisable monomer of formula I



(I)

comprising the steps of:

(i) contacting a compound of formula II



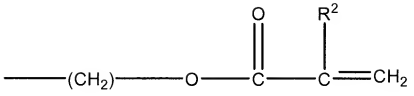
(II)

with an immobilised acid,

wherein X, Y, Z, ~~R[1],~~ P and Q are independently selected from a hydrocarbyl group or hydrogen, ~~hydrogen and wherein~~ A is $(CH_2)_n$, wherein n is 0 or 1; and

wherein:

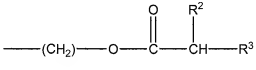
R^1 is a group of the formula IIIA



IIIA

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl; or

R^1 is group of formula IIIB



IIIB

R^2 is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl, and
R^3 is an unsaturated $C_{2\text{-}5}$ alkyl; and

(ii) neutralising the product of step (i) such that the cross-linker is formed.

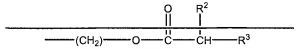
2. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid is a strong acid.

3. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acid is immobilised on an ion exchange resin.

4. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein X and Y are independently selected from hydrocarbon groups having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and hydrogen.

5. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein R^1 is a group of formula IIIB, wherein R^2 is CH_3 ~~selected from hydrocarbon groups having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms, and hydrocarbyl esters, preferably unsaturated hydrocarbyl esters~~.

6. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein X is H; Y is H; Z is H; n = 0 and R^1 is a group of formula IIIA in which R^2 is CH_3 ~~formula III~~



~~(III)~~

~~wherein R^2 is selected from methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl and R^3 is selected from an unsaturated C_{1-5} alkyl~~.

7-8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1 comprising ~~providing means for~~ containing the immobilised acid, contacting the immobilised acid with the compound of formula II and passing a gas through the immobilised acid.

10. (original) A process according to claim 9 wherein the gas is air.

11. (original) A process according to claim 9 wherein the immobilised acid is contacted with the compound of formula II in the absence of an organic solvent.

12. (original) A process according to claim 1 step (i) is performed in the presence of water.

13. (currently amended) A process according to claim 9 wherein ~~the means for~~ containing the immobilised acid comprises a fluidised bed reactor.

14. (currently amended) A process according to claim 9 wherein the process comprises extracting the gas from ~~the means for containing~~ the contained immobilised acid after the gas has passed through the immobilised acid.

15. (currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the process further comprises the step of polymerising the polymerisable monomer of formula I, whereby a polymer is formed.

16. (currently amended) A process according to claim 15 wherein ~~the acid~~ an acid is formed during the process and said acid is methacrylic acid.

17. (currently amended) A process according to claim 15 wherein ~~the acid~~ an acid is formed during the process and said acid is acrylic acid.

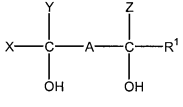
18. (original) A process according to claim 15 further comprising forming an ocular device from the polymer.

19. (currently amended) A polymerisable monomer~~, polymer~~ or composition obtained ~~obtainable~~ in accordance with process as defined in claim 1.

20. (currently amended) A ~~polymerisable monomer,~~ polymer ~~or composition~~ obtained in accordance with a process as defined in claim 15 ~~claim 1~~.

21. (original) An ocular device prepared in accordance with a process as defined in claim 18.

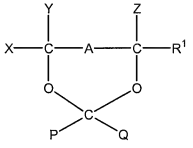
22. (original) A process for the preparation of a polymerisable composition comprising a cross-linker and a polymerisable monomer of formula I



(I)

comprising the steps of:

(i) contacting a compound of formula II



(II)

with an immobilised acid,
having a pKa of less than 3,

wherein X and Y are independently selected from hydrocarbon groups having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and hydrogen, R^1 is selected from hydrocarbon groups having from 1 to 20 carbon atoms and hydrocarbyl esters, Z, P and Q are independently selected from a hydrocarbyl group or hydrogen, and wherein A is $(CH_2)_n$ wherein n is 0 or 1;

(ii) neutralising the product of step (i) such that the cross-linker is formed.